EAST AND WEST SERIES

No. 88 DOUBLE NUMBER July-Aug., 1964

9/240.

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THE DEDICATED LIFE

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T. L. VASWANI

EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

9/240

THE DEDICATED LIFE

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The "East and West Series" seeks to spread the message of the saints and sages, the prophets and *rishis* of Humanity. They have appeared in all ages. They have sanctified both East and West.

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In India :—Rs. 3/–; outside India :—8 s. or $ 1·50 or equivalent.

Life-subscription :—Rs. 100/– or £ 10 or $ 30·00.

For a specimen copy send stamps worth 50 nP.

Write to :—

The Manager, "East and West Series,"
10 Connaught Road, Poona–1, (India).

IMPORTANT

Kindly note that this is a double number for the two months, July and August, 1964.

Our next issue, also, will be a double number (for September and October) and will be out in October.

—The Manager

BLESSINGS AND MESSAGES

It seems to me that education as Dadaji understands and describes it (in East and West Series, No. 87) is the only right and natural road for all nations to follow. Skyscrapers and other forms of triumphant materialism do not appear to be teaching anybody how to express progressively the divine inner spirit of man.

As a good will offering to you and your publication, I enclose a cheque for $ 100.

With warmest greetings to you and all my friends at St. Mira's.

Woodland Kahler Marquis de St. Innocent
President, International Vegetarian Union, England

I am greatly benefitted by reading the "Series." It is beyond my wits to assess the worth of the "Series" for which you charge the almost negligible amount of three rupees per year. Please tender my respectful pranams to Revered Dadaji.

V. B. Naik
Editor, "Sandarshana," Bijapur

Your chief, Vaswaniji, is an inspired leader. He radiates spiritual vitality and his journal must surely be helping to awaken India to her true *dharma*.

The article on Nalanda is a clarion call for education as service. I should like to see a similar article on Taxila, if it is a suitable topic and you have not already dealt with it.

I think I met Vaswaniji in England. I was at Harrogate in 1910. He came one week-end and talked to the T. S. Lodge. I was guest in the same house and escorted him to the hall in Beulah Road.

J. L. Davidge
Australia

Printed by P. H. Ramchandani at Lokasangraha Press, 1786, Sadashiv Peth, Poona-2, and published by him from Gita Publishing House, 10 Connaught Road, Poona-1.

Editor and owner : J. P. VASWANI

This issue : 75 nP. or 1s. 6d. or 30 cents

9/240

FOREWORD

In this number an interpretation is offered of the true life reflected in the form of stories and parables. This number may well be named, "The Dedicated Life." Of the life dedicated I think, again and again, at this hour, when my heart is grieved at the sudden departure of my dear nephew*, whom I loved to regard as a "child." He was equipped with scientific knowledge and he was humble in the wisdom of the Heart! I have remembered the words of a Hindu seer. "The longer here we linger," he said, " 'tis only grief we gain! But there is a heavenly city where we shall have no pain."

In the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads, in the saints and poets of Southern India and in Guru Nanak Dev and Kabir, among others, we have an outline of the dedicated life which is indicated in this number.

In one chapter of this number we read of Visvarupa, Sri Chaitanya's elder brother, who left his home in quest but "never came back," for he realised, as the Dravidian poet teaches us, that

"Here we see much that is false and fleeting : this land is one of vanity :
But there is a land of vision where grace our lot shall be!
O, for that day!

"Nor sun nor moon there shineth, nor stars where God is light.

I long to reach that city of glory, heavenly bright!
When will it be?

* Dr. H. P. Vaswani

"As with joy blooms the lotus, before the rising sun,
By grace shall I be gladdened,—the grace of the Holy One!
When will it be?"

This was the deepest cry of Visvarupa's heart when he left his home, his beloved mother and father, in quest of the Eternal.

In another chapter of this number is a brief sketch of Shiv Dyal, whom I call a "pilgrim of Eternity." He, too, like Visvarupa, longed to live the "true life" at the Feet of God.

This thought of God, the unending thought of the Eternal, lives in the heart of every one who dedicates his life to the Infinite. His life becomes an unending song in meditation of the Lord, as was shown by the "holy man of Egypt," Junnuna, of whom a brief sketch is offered in another section.

Deeper than thought, unseen by many, unknown except to her, Rabia the blessed, this thought awoke in her heart and made it a temple which gave joy to many who stood in the streets of Basra, every morn, to have a glance at her beauteous face. The people came, every morning, from many quarters of the city to see and, if possible, to hear Rabia, the devotee of the Lord. Her face seemed to say to every one :—"A million strings vibrate in me. Every moment new and new symphonies sound in my soul." Here was a truly "dedicated life," because while engaged in doing lowly duties of life, she always thought of Him, Allah the Pure, *Pak Allah!*

The "dedicated life" is a simple life. The "Pagal," of whom one chapter in this number speaks, was absorbed in the song of the soul within,—the song in which he always thought of Him. The thought was to Pagal a celestial music.

In one chapter of this number, I speak of the "Man

Enigmatical." The enigma of his life was even this: he gave his life as an offering to Him, the One Supreme, who, he said, "speaks not, nor does He smile. Enough for me is His Presence. Enough for me the eternal aspirations of my soul and their eternal unfulfilment."

I am happy there is a chapter in this number on "the way of service." It is the way open to the ordinary man, to every one of us who has a sincere desire to live the dedicated life. He who liveth this life becomes a blessing to many. For in him is awakened what the number calls "the heart of a healer." Shanti Deva had the heart which went out in sympathy and love to sorrowing, suffering men. Shanti Deva had the heart of a healer.

Of a great Sufi teacher, a disciple asked :—"What is service?" And the Sufi teacher said :—"He that has two garments, let him share one with him who is naked, and let him not eat his food without sharing it with a hungry man or woman." "Give food to the poor," he said, "and give compassion to the sinner and love to all creatures."

On this note this number closes. In this note is a harmony of the true Sufi and the true Hindu, the true Vaishnava of whom the great Gujarati poet, Narsi Mehta, has sung so beautifully. The true Vaishnava is he, says the poet,—the true Hindu is he, let me add,—who knows his brother's weal and woe, who helps his poor brother, his needy sister, without pride, who helps remembering in his heart the Lord and remembering, too, that his body is a pilgrim's garb. Wrath and desire defile not him who walks the way of service. Such a man truly walks the way of the life dedicated. Such a man, says Narsi Mehta, attains "the heaven of purest bliss!"

T. L. VASWANI

THE WAY OF SERVICE

THIS happened before his great Revelation to Arjuna at Kurukshetra,—said Madhava.

At a small fair in a quiet little village I saw him. They had come together,—men, women and children,—from neighbouring hamlets : they had put on new clothes of different colours that day. One there was in the crowd who easily attracted attention. He played upon the flute : and, as I heard him, I opened the window of my heart to let in more and more of the melody of his song.

I wished to know all I could of this man with music in him. He was there, I learnt, not to win a street-singer's meagre reward : he was there, for he loved the people. He lived, I learnt, in a little house on the roadside.

I called on him a day after the fair. There was in him the soul of a child and the mind of a sage. His one devotion was to his flute which he played upon most wonderfully in his house and in the street, the market and the field, on the hill-top and by the side of the stream. I called on him in the evening : he greeted me with glad remembrance. I was there, I said, to make his *darshana* and to hear him sing and speak to me.

I asked him what was the secret of the "greatness" of which men and nations were in such weary quest.

"Greatness," said the Flute-player, "is the mask put on by the petty-minded. If you, my child, would love, renounce greatness. Strive not to be great but to be a servant of Humanity,—a servant of all Life."

"The way of service?" I asked.

The Flute-player had travelled much. He had met many minds. He had meditated much on nature, its beauty

and grandeur,—on life, its pain and strife,—on history made by the broken dreams of God's rebels,—the dreams of Truth and Beauty and Freedom disturbed, again and again, by power and pride.

The Flute-player paused for a few moments, then said :—"As to the way of service, the one thing to do is to *unveil illusions*. Each age has its illusions : and what is called progress is often a climb from illusion to illusion. The other-world illusion has played its part in human life. Yet another is the illusion of civilisation."

Proceeding further, the Flute-player said :—"To unveil illusions is to see the Beautiful, is to behold the *Atman*, the Spirit within. Money, fame, titles, power,—utilities,—are sought by men who have not the vision that grows out of *gnana*, knowledge. Do you see the Beautiful in the struggles and conflicts of your life? If not, you have not learnt to tread the path of service."

I asked how to him had come the knowledge of the One, how he had become a Singer, a Flute-player, a Worshipper of the Beautiful.

Then he told me how sorrow had entered into his heart and sorrow had turned into Song.

Note after note of sorrow was sounded by his flute. At its heart was the yearning of one who loved nature and life and sang to peasants and labourers and the poor village-folk the Song which ravished their hearts. Out of his sorrow he had built his art. In the dark waters of sorrow had he seen the Beauty that is God.

And before I took leave of him, he played upon his flute sounding through it notes of the strangest Beauty. And when I asked him what they meant, he looked into my eyes and said :—"Follow where the flute is leading : for 'tis the beauty of suffering that makes life rich and strong and free in this bitter world of hate and strife."

DARIDRA NARAYANA

THEY called him by many names. The one epithet he appreciated much was:—Friend of the poor, *Daridra Narayana.*

Krishna could not be a Friend of the idler. The Gita is eloquent with a great message of action.

How sad to think that there are poor men,—honest, simple, loving, God-fearing,—who are trampled upon by the proud of power and riches! And against the pride of power and wealth, the worship of money, Krishna protested, again and again.

He heard the murmuring pain of the poor, the lowly and the lost : he entered into sympathy with them and with those who were afflicted with suffering and diseases. He healed the sick. He became a physician of the body and the soul. He laid his hand on the heart of the homeless and made them strong and whole.

He left the rich feast of a Raja to eat a poor man's saltless vegetable with joy. The poor man was Vidura,—his *bhakta.*

God is the Great Wandering Brother of the poor. He wanders from place to place to bless and heal the broken ones.

Indra, the great god, is angry, we read, when people turn away their thoughts from him to Krishna. The gods have igreatness, not perfection. And the simple, in a sense, are greater than the gods! Indra, in his anger, calls up wnds and clouds, and flings them against those who give allegiance to Krishna. Some of his men leave him in fear of Indra. "But," says the Ancient Record, "the cowherds remain with Krishna." Yes,—the poor cowherds remain loyal to the Lord. Krishna dwells in the cottage : Krishna seeketh not the palace and the temple.

THE DIVINE FLUTE-PLAYER

They who are devoted to the welfare of all beings come to Me!

—Sri Krishna

RABIA

Thou, O Lord ! art enough for me :
I need nothing else, nothing else !

—*Rabia*

A king built a Crystal Temple. He spent lakhs of rupees to make it the noblest building in the realm. But he ordered that the Temple was not for the poor. None of them must enter it.

And there came to the town a *sadhu* (a holy man). And he sat under a tree and worshipped the Lord. And thousands thronged to join the *sadhu* in his worship under the tree. The Temple looked a deserted place.

The king offered bags of money to all who would come and worship in the Temple.

"No," said they, "our place is by the side of the *sadhu* under the tree."

The king met the *sadhu* and said to him :—"A Crystal Temple have I built. It cost lakhs. It is beautiful. I request you to come and worship there."

Then spake the *sadhu* to the King :—"Sire! your Crystal Temple has cost lakhs, but it is not beautiful, for Krishna is not there. He dwells in the cottages of the poor. And the poor you have turned away from the Temple. I cannot come to your Temple until the poor have blest it!"

KRISHNA points out to Arjuna in the Gita that the true man is a man of *dana* : he gives! Give to the needy of your money. Yet more than money is sympathy, is love of the heart. Better than all gifts is the gift of yourself!

There are those who give,—to receive applause. But a few there be who give : they have but little : they give it in sympathy and joy : they believe in the bounty of life : and in their eyes shines the Krishna-Light.

They give not as do those who say they will give only to the deserving. They give as giveth the Sun its light to the good and the evil. They give, for to them hath been given the *Guru-mantra* :—"To give is to live and to hold back is to turn away from the Light and pass into the night!"

RABIA'S HEART

A companion asked Rabia :—"Is there a thing you would like to eat?"

Rabia said :—"You know I wish to eat dates. For ten years have I lived here : dates are plenty here. But I have not yet eaten a single date. Why? I am a servant of the One Master. The desire of the servant matters little. I can but eat or have what the Beloved wills for me!"

Rabia, indeed, had renounced everything to God. Not one thing could she call her own. Nothing belonged to her. All belonged to her Beloved. She, too, was not her own but entirely His.

When asked :—"You speak of God : you worship Him. Have you seen Him?" Rabia answered :—"If I see Him not, how can I worship Him? But the Beloved cannot be weighed in words!"

Filled to overflowing was Rabia's heart with love. And to the worst of sinners she gave the love of her gentle heart.

One day she was asked :—"Don't you regard Satan as your enemy?"

Rabia gently answered :—"In my heart is limitless love for my Beloved : and I find there is not an empty corner in my heart for enmity to anyone or desire to fight anyone. By God's grace there is not one whom I may regard as my enemy!"

Someone asked Rabia :—"What is wisdom?"

Rabia said :—"True wisdom is knowledge of God : and the secret of knowledge is surrender to the Will Divine."

A friend asked her :—"Who among men is truly great?"

And Rabia answered :—"He who has achieved four things. (1) He who has purified his heart. (2) He who with

the purified heart has learnt to pray to God. (3) He who hath risen to that true prayer which surrenders all to Him in a spirit of *tawakul*, believing that He will take the best care of him. And (4) he who is absorbed in meditation on Him and in singing His Name."

"Whence are you come?" they asked her.

And she said :—"From the Other Shore!"

They asked her again :—"Whither are you going?"

She replied :—"To the Other Shore!"

"If a man possessed the whole world," they asked, "would he not be immeasurably rich?"

Rabia answered :—"How could he be rich? The whole world would not make him wealthy : for the riches of the world perish and pass away."

"What do you desire?" Sufyan asked her.

Rabia answered :—"I am a servant : what has a servant to do with desires? If I ask for anything which my Lord does not will, then, indeed, I am an atheist, an unbeliever! If, indeed, I would be His servant, I should will only what He, my Divine Master, wills!"

A friend said to her :—"Rabia! you are ill : much have you suffered. Why don't you pray to God for relief from illness?"

Rabia answered :—"O friend! know you not who it is who wills this suffering for me? Is it not God who wills it?"

There was but one prayer in Rabia's heart, day and night :—"O God! My God! Thy Will be done!"

Malik Dinar was a Sufi : he was deeply pained to find that Rabia spent her days in poverty. He met her, one day, and said to her :—"Permit me, Rabia! to ask my rich friends to relieve your poverty."

Rabia looked at Malik Dinar and said :—"Your friends are rich. Is it not true that He,—the One Lord,—gives daily bread alike to them and to me? Does He not know

my state? Why then, should you remind Him that I am poor? Let us will what He wills and we shall be happy!"

"Whence is Love?" they asked her, "and whither does it go?"

Rabia answered :—"Love cometh from Eternity : and love is a pilgrim to Eternity!"

Once she fell ill. In her heart was deep longing for God. And in a moment of inward pain she exclaimed :—"The healing of my wound is union with the Friend!"

A friend asked her :—"How may we know that God is well pleased with His servant?"

Rabia said :—"When the servant greets suffering as a gift from Him even as he would greet what he regards as good,—regarding both pain and pleasure as messengers of God."

A friend asked her :—"What is the deepest need of the life of him who is in quest of God?"

Rabia said :—"He who would walk the Way needs neither eyes to see, nor tongue to tell. What he needs is a pure heart. So strive for purity. Then will your consciousness awake and you will no longer fall into the slumber of the senses. When the mind is truly awakened, it serves as a true friend : then, indeed, you need no other friend."

Her companion asked her :—"What is meant by the awakened mind?"

Rabia answered :—"One mark of the awakened mind is that it is centred in God and will not wander after anything else. The mind that is absorbed in the service of the One hath craving for nothing else."

Rabia had an "awakened mind" : and she had an "illuminated heart." Therefore was her life rich in the mystical element of love and adoration.

VISVARUPA : THE MAN WHO NEVER CAME BACK

WHO was he? He longed to walk with the Lord, in lowly paths, by unknown ways,—free. He went out, leaving all possessions and bore the strain of travel, far and wide. And, as he wandered from village to village, he heard, again and again, the cry in his heart :—"O Lord! guide Thou my lowly feet in the Homeward Way!"

Visvarupa read much. He meditated much. And he was filled with a longing for the Lord. He was not more than sixteen when *vairagya* (spirit of detachment) awoke in his heart. He began to see the futility of things. A near relative of his was Lokanath. To him only Visvarupa opened his heart, from time to time. Lokanath was devoted to Visvarupa as a disciple to his Guru.

Visvarupa's father, Pandit Jagannath, saw his son grow in knowledge and beauty, and desired very much to see that he was betrothed to a girl of a good family. Visvarupa became more and more detached in his talk and dealings. He wore, more and more, a look of abstraction. And, over and over again, the question arose within him :—"Can marriage give me peace of mind?"

ONE day, all of a sudden, a vision rises before him. In it he sees that mother, father, brother, friend,—all are forms, fleeting, passing, transient. The one Reality is the Spirit. He sees that, dragged by desire, men wander, without understanding, in the wheel of birth and death. Men wander in the way of ignorance. Men have lost the True Way, the Way of Wisdom. As from a high watch-tower, men, beasts, birds, trees, all seem to be as grains, specks of dust, so do

father, mother, friends, relatives, all dwindle into small specks, and Visvarupa's *moha* (attachment) for them vanishes.

Visvarupa understands himself! He says to himself :—"Let me look upon all these men with compassion. They think, they desire, they plan each day. They wander, being driven hither and thither by *maya* : they wander in darkness. They say :—'Let us enjoy today : we shall think of God tomorrow.' Alas! they know not that tomorrow may not come, for the body is perishable and may drop down dead any moment. Let me not wait till tomorrow. Let me think of God, today! Let me think of the soul,—my true welfare, —without delay. When the house is on fire, how foolish to wait !"

VISVARUPA's younger brother is Nimai. Visvarupa says to his mother one day :—"Mother! Here is a little book : I have brought it for dear Nimai. Give it to him when he grows in years : do not forget!"

The mother is simple. She does not understand what Visvarupa really means. She says to him :—"When Nimai grows in years! Surely you will not then be far. If I forget, you will not, I am sure! You will with your hand give this book to dear Nimai, and he will study the book at your feet. You are a scholar!"

Visvarupa says :—"Yes, mother! if I remain, I shall certainly give the book to dear Nimai with my hand. But you should remember!"

The simple mother does not know that Visvarupa is a guest in her house, that in a few days he will leave home in quest of the Lord.

It is a summer night. Visvarupa is sleepless : he is meditating on the problem of life. "Shall I attain?" he asks himself.

His eyes survey his house. He gazes at his mother : by her is sleeping Nimai. His father is sleeping on a separate cot. Visvarupa gazes, again and again, at his father : his hair is white, his brow has marks of anxiety. And Visvarupa, in a weak moment, says to himself :—"Father is old and poor. Nimai is still a boy. If father passes away, and if I too leave home, who will take care of mother and Nimai?"

For a moment Visvarupa,—a man with the make-up of a mystic and a saint,—feels depressed, embarassed, nerve-tired. Then he reflects. He begins to feel that all forms begin and have their end : all things perish. Alone space and law remain. All the worlds,—the suns, the moons, the stars,—flow back into formlessness. And he says to himself :—"Death overtaketh all, and in the interlude called 'life,' all beings are sustained by the one World-Power. Who am I to say that I can take care of mother and Nimai? The one World-Power alone holds, protects, nourishes creatures, until they go back to the eternal drift! I go!"

He bows down to his mother, now fast asleep. With one last, longing look he gazes at Nimai : then he swiftly goes out.

He reaches the bank of the Ganges. The night is dark : it is difficult to get a boat. Visvarupa is fearless. "Mother! I come to thee!" he cries. Then he plunges into the river : he swims to the other shore. He meets a *sanyasin* and is initiated by him into *sanyasa*. Visvarupa is henceforth called Shankaranya. And for two years he goes from place to place, a pilgrim to ancient shrines, until he reaches the famous shrine of Pandharpur in the Maharashtra. In this shrine he stays and meditates on the Mystery of Life. In this shrine he lives in a corner the life of a contemplative untll he leaves this world.

THE dawn awakes. Pandit Jagannath cries a lonely cry :—"Where is Visvarupa?" A search for him is made : but Visvarupa cannot be found.

The news now is bruited abroad that Visvarupa has left his home and gone out. Where? Who knows? Pandit Jagannath is shedding tears. Several groups talk of Visvarupa. Some say :—"Dark is the night of *kaliyuga*, and seekers like Visvarupa leave the world in search of the eternal Home!" The mother, Sachidevi, cries out, again and again :—"O Earth! why hast thou concealed my beloved child?"

Visvarupa is gone! And never will he come back to his earthly home. Visvarupa is gone into solitude to grow into the realisation that all things change, only the One abides, —that men know not who run their race of life through hot desires, that only the Wise, flooded with devotion, reach the Heart, and in the Heart commune with the Beauty that never dies.

One of these Wise Men was Visvarupa!

SHIV DYAL : A PILGRIM OF ETERNITY

He was the Rose in which bloomed the beauty such as is not seen on earth or sea.

Even as a boy, he spoke of strange things. Of Mozart, the musician, we read that he sang wonderfully at the age of seven. Of Shiv Dyal we read that he gave utterance to deep spiritual truths even when he was a boy of seven years or eight.

His father was a merchant and a devotee of sages and saints. Shiv Dyal himself was free, from the beginning of his days, from all desire for money. He lived a quiet life. What he inherited from his father was enough for him. He had not to earn his livelihood. He had a meditative cast of mind : and he was a lover of wisdom and of the words of the saints of God.

While still young, he came in contact with a holy man, a saint,—God-absorbed, God-intoxicated. The name of the saint was Tulsi Sahib, popularly called "Sahibjee." Tulsi Sahib was a Mahratta Brahmin and the eldest son of the Raja of Poona.

Tulsi sahib's life, I confess, has a strange fascination for me. He never wished to marry : but his father had him married at the early age of twelve years. In his heart he had, even at that age, taken the vow of celibacy : and to this vow he remained true, in spite of his marriage. His wife was a devout lady and lived a life of singular purity and singular devotion to Tulsi Sahib.

Years passed : and his father fixed a day for the coronation of Tulsi Sahib,—the Raja wishing to retire and live a

contemplative life. So did many a Raja in the day when India was a free nation. Tulsi Sahib was nominated as the Raja's successor to the throne. But Tulsi Sahib's heart was not in earthly honours and greatness : his heart was in the Eternal.

A day before the Coronation Day, he mounted a horse and ran away from Poona. The Raja sent men in different directions to bring back the Rajkumar,—Tulsi Sahib : none could catch him. The Raja waited for sometime : Tulsi Sahib did not return. And the Raja installed on the throne his second son, Baji Rao.

Tulsi Sahib wandered for many years. He lived in mountains and forests. He put on the *sadhu's* garb. Then he came to a village named Hathrasa, near Aligarh. He started a *satsang* in Hathrasa. His joy was not in crowds but in fellowship with prepared souls to whom he gave *updesh* and pointed the Way. From time to time, he came to Agra and there lived in the house of Shiv Dyal's father. A tradition says that when he first saw Shiv Dyal, Tulsi Sahib gazed at the young man, again and again, and said :—"He is destined to be a saint!"

Tulsi Sahib's life and teaching influenced Shiv Dyal immensely. Shiv Dyal never married. He did not take up a job. He did not enter business. He lived in the house of his father and meditated on the Great Mystery,—until he opened a *satsang* in a Garden, three miles away from Agra.

SHIV DYAL taught,—as Tulsi Sahib taught,—that to cross the sea of sorrow, the help and guidance of a "Sant-Satguru" was essential. Both Tulsi Sahib and Shiv Dyal taught that the mind must be annihilated, i.e. the little self, ego, "I," must go before spiritual life can grow.

The teaching of Shiv Dyal is known as the Radhaswami Faith. The teaching is inspired by a cosmic vision and a lofty spiritual ideal. Shiv Dyal's teaching and that of Tulsi Sahib are, to my mind, essentially one. Both the great spiritual seers refer to six centres in the body : both speak of six worlds in the cosmos, and both point to a Realm of the Spirit above the body and the cosmos. This Realm is named "Dyal Desh." To reach it, you must practise "Surat Yoga." Therefore, must you turn inward : then you may hear *Shabda*, also named *Nama*. The music of *Shabda* is enchanting : the *Shabda* is in every atom, in everything, in every body, in every orbit and circle and round of evolution.

The teaching thrills my soul. It shows the universe to be a shrine of divine mysteries. It shows that men absorbed in their phenomenal life live in forgetfulness and fail to see the wonderful nearness of God. Between man and God are the veils of matter and mind, the veils of the body and the ego. When the veils go, the Beloved is revealed!

A HOLY MAN OF EGYPT

JUNNUNA is young : he hears of a holy man. He goes to meet this man of God,—this *tapasvi* (ascetic). Junnuna finds that the *tapasvi* is suspended in a tree, his head downwards, his feet upwards, and he is repeatedly saying to himself :—"O thou, my body! if thou wilt not cooperate with me in my spiritual aspirations and discipline, I shall torture thee thus! I shall keep thee hungry and thirsty until thou diest!"

Junnuna weeps as he hears these words. The *tapasvi* hears the sobs of Junnuna and, calling him, says :—"Look! who is there who will have compassion upon one who is not only full of sins but is not ashamed of sins?"

Junnuna asks :—"I understand you not. Tell me clearly what you mean."

The *tapasvi* says :—"Look! this body of mine refuses to help me in the service and worship of the Lord. This body would rather mix with the crowds and make merry. So I am teaching it the practice of abstinence."

Junnuna asks :—"Have you committed murder or some other heinous sins?"

Tapasvi :—No!

Junnuna :—Are you a great *vairagi* (ascetic)?

Tapasvi :—"No! No! If you would see a great *vairagi*, ascend this mountain and see him on the top!"

JUNNUNA goes up the mountain and sees that at the door of a cottage is sitting a *tapasvi* (ascetic). His one foot is inside the cottage : his other foot, which is cut, is outside the cottage. Ants have surrounded the foot. Junnuna

draws near, salutes him, and asks what the matter is.

The *tapasvi* says :—"I sat in my cottage, one day, and I saw in front of me a young woman coming out of her house. I saw her and was bewitched with her beauty. I longed to see her lovely face again. So I stood up and I had hardly put one foot outside my cottage, when I heard suddenly a voice saying to me :—'O ascetic! art thou not ashamed of thyself? Thou hast glorified the Lord for thirty years. Thou dost call thyself a *bhakta* (devotee of the Lord). Yet art thou entangled in the snare of Satan! Beware! Rise above the glamour of that young woman! Awake! Awake! Or be thou fallen in the pit of hell!'

"And listening to these words, I trembled. I cut the foot which I had placed outside the cottage. I threw the foot outside : since then I have sat there, patiently awaiting what is to come. Brother! why hast thou come to me, a sinner? If thou wouldst see a true *mahatma* (saint), then go forward. Thou wilt see him on yon mountain-height!"

JUNNUNA is unable to ascend so high. So he returns to the *tapasvi* and enquires of him all about the *mahatma*. The *tapasvi* says :—"On yon mountain-heights sits a true *sadhu*, a *mahatma*. One day, there came to him a man who said :—'If a man will not earn, how will he live? Life depends on your daily exertions. What can the grace of God do,—unaided by human efforts?' Hearing this, the *mahatma* said to himself :—'Is not the grace of God all-sufficient? If a man will not work hard, does God become impotent to help him? I resolve not to eat what a man may bring to me.' And for several days the *tapasvi* ate nothing. Then God guarded the man's life : how? The bees came and built a hive there : and the honey of that hive was eaten by the *tapasvi*. His life was saved!"

Junnuna hears and his heart is filled with faith in God and God's unfailing love. "He will take care of me," says Junnuna; "He will not leave me in the dust."

Junnuna returns home. On the way he sees a blind bird alighting from a tree. And Junnuna says to himself :— "Whence does this blind bird get his daily food?" What does Junnuna see ? The blind bird scratches the earth, and underneath are a few grains and drops of water. The bird eats and drinks and is perched again upon the tree. Junnuna's faith in God is intensified. Junnuna's life is revolutionised : he becomes new!

Not yet is he become a "Master," but he has received his first lesson. He now longs to live a new life. He longs to be desireless. He begins to see the world of life in the light of God,—the Providence of all! He sees that in him starts the process of a new creative life. New aspiration takes its birth within him. He begins to see the vanity of earthly ambitions, of honours and fame. He grows in the strength to renounce !

But he is not yet pure enough. "God, the great Master," he says, "will purify me and in His good time make me a child of His Light,—a child of Grace,—and, passing through the fire, I, too, may shine as gold thrice-refined!"

Junnuna prays intensely :—"O Lord! make me Thine. Let not the world overwhelm me! But fill me with Thy Presence that I may see Thy Beauty everywhere!"

One day, he goes to a river to have his bath and offer his prayers to God. Junnuna enters into the river, when lo and behold! his eyes, are turned to the roof of a radiant house. One is standing on the roof and Junnuna's eyes are there,—transfixed! He is absorbed in a form of wondrous beauty. A young woman is standing on the roof, and

Junnuna looks on! Junnuna has lost himself in this vision of loveliness. And, waking from this vision, he says to her :—"O beautiful one! are you married? And what is your name?"

And she answers :—"Junnuna! you are no stranger to me. Your name has travelled to me, and I was told that you were a *fakir*, a man of realisation, wisdom-filled, God-intoxicated. And when I saw you at a distance, I was filled with a longing to see you and be blessed. Now I see you near and now I know, alas! that earthly beauty bereaves you of reason and self-control!"

And longing to hear her more,—for to him her words were sweeter than honey,—he says :—"Speak to me more clearly, for my mind is confused. And true it is I feel, at this moment, like a drunken man!"

And she, in whose heart is love of God and love of the saints of God, speaketh,—her eyes radiant with compassion and humility :—"Junnuna! if you were a *fakir*, you would not be distracted by a form. If you were a man of realisation, you would know that what endureth not is for ever and ever only a dream. If you were wisdom-filled, your heart would rise above desire and be lifted to the beatific vision of eternal Truth. If you were God-intoxicated, your joy would be in Him, not in a frail, fickle creature of dust and desire,—in Him and His Light, which is brighter than the sun, the moon and the stars!"

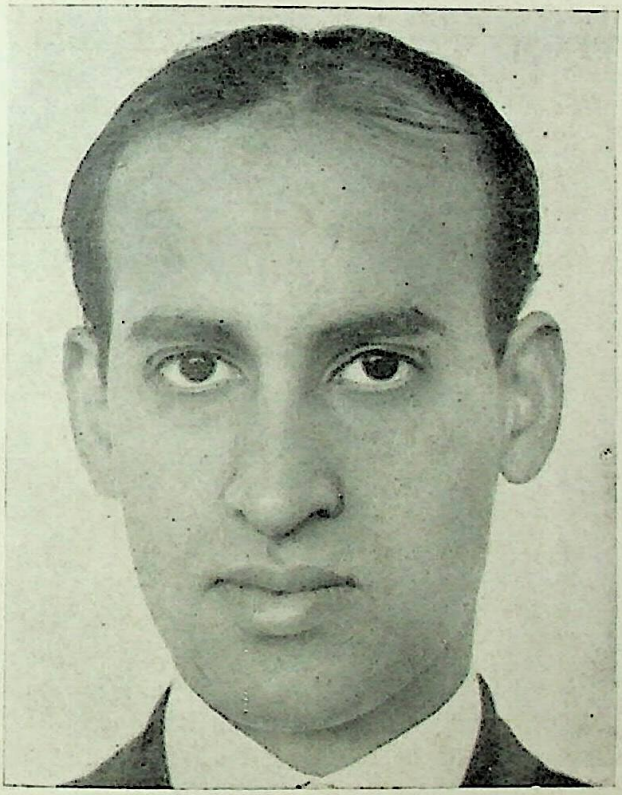
So saying, she vanishes. And Junnuna turns this way and that. She hath vanished : and tears tremble in his eyes. And for some moments he meditates upon her words and says to himself :—"What she hath said of me is true. Every word of that radiant one had a ring of sincerity. It is true I am not yet become a true *fakir* : wisdom is still afar! For I see that in my heart is a flame, not a spring of the holy water that heals : and in mine eyes is still earthly

desire, not the intoxication of the Eternal Name. What right have I to live? Death! O Death! Come and enfold me!"

JUNNUNA now enters into the waters of the Nile. He wishes to drown himself. A merchant's boat is moving on the waters. Some one in the boat sees Junnuna being drowned and raises the cry :—"Save! O save!" The boat stops and picks up Junnuna. He is saved, and he is beaten,—blow after blow falling upon his back and his face. The merchant strikes him, beats him black and blue. Why? The merchant has lost precious pearls and suspects Junnuna to be the thief! But Junnuna bears all the blows with the patience of a true *bhakta*. Junnuna says to himself :—"O Lord! Thou knowest all!"

The lost pearls are, later, found elsewhere, and the merchant, on bended knee, tells Junnuna :—"Forgive me! I have beaten you and I have sinned!"

Junnuna never forgets what has happened,—never forgets the mercy of the Lord. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff,—they shall comfort me." The Lord hath saved Junnuna : the Lord hath punished him! He feels purified and he sheds tears in longing for the Lord. And he is out, again, in quest!



DR. H. P. VASWANI

Born :
October 15, 1928

Passed away :
July 23, 1964

THE MESSAGE OF THE DARK NIGHT

That night, when I heard the news, I was half asleep.

Then I offered a brief mental prayer. And the thought in my mind was in the poet's words which I often recited in the days of my youth :—

O Thou, Presence Supreme !
O Thou, Love Immortal !
Whom we who have not seen Thy Face,
By faith and faith alone embrace,
What reason cannot prove !

Then in my wanderings that night, in my dreamland, methinks, I saw thee. A light flowed from thy head and thine eyes. And a flood of light filled the open ground. The very particles of earth and sand seemed to shine as grains of gold. And in my dreamland, I saw thy labourers whom thou didst love with the love of a brother and who loved thee as, perhaps, they had not loved any officer before.

Then I touched thy feet, saying:—"Bless me !"

Then thou didst weep as a child. And thy face was illuminated. And, with tears touching my eyes, I looked around. And in the dark of that night I saw what I cannot tell. But I heard, so I thought, a voice, shrill as the voice of a flute, saying :—" Be reconciled ! "

This message I have enshrined in my heart :—" Be reconciled!" For men may come and men may go but Thou, O Lord! endurest for ever. And Thou art Love Immortal !

At His Feet rest thou, beloved Harish Chandra, beloved of many hearts ! Rest thou in the peace that is life, in the peace that is love! Rest thou and bless us all, giving us, every day, this message of the dark night:—" Be reconciled ! Be reconciled ! "

I think of thee best, beloved Harcha! as a friend and servant of the poor and lowly.

For years I sought my Lord but found Him not. Then I worshipped brother man in suffering and pain. And finding him, I found God, my Lord. I found all the three,—Thee, my Lord, and myself, and my brother.

T. L. VASWANI

10 Connaught Road,
Poona-1, 28. 7. 64.

A NOBLE SON OF MOTHER INDIA

Amid scenes of great sorrow and sobbing, the mortal remains of Dr. H. P. Vaswani, the brilliant 35-year-old Engineer who died after an accidental fall, last night, were consigned to the five elements of the earth at the Shankar Shet Road Crematorium, this morning.

Dr. Vaswani's mortal remains bedecked with pink roses, white lilies and red marigolds, depicted a grim picture of the tragedy in which his illustrious career was plucked short, while burning mid-night oil to erect the Associated Ball Bearing's new factory with missionary zeal; and hundreds of his friends, colleagues and acquaintances along with relatives thronged to bid farewell to their beloved "doctor".

Since morning, mourners filed past the body at St. Mira's Hall where Sadhu Vaswani, India's Philosopher-Saint and an uncle of the departed engineer, preached the gospel of Truth and life on it. Sadhu Vaswani sat in meditation offering prayers for the departed soul. They came in hundreds; students, labourers, construction workers of Larsen and Toubro, world-renowned engineers for whom Dr. Vaswani worked as the Chief Construction Engineer, and almost all of them broke down to see the unearthly calmness on his face, a face which was smile personified.

Dr. Vaswani was one of the few engineers in India who held a Doctor of Science degree in engineering. After passing his B. E. (Civil) from College of Engineering, Poona, he went to UK and Sweden where he earned several honours and distinctions. His academic career was crowned with a D. Sc. in structural engineering.

Larsen and Toubro offered him a high assignment to begin with, and he handled huge construction jobs at Rourkela Steel Plants and was given the work of constructing the ABC factory at Chinchwad, where he met his death. Dr. Vaswani's worth to the company was invaluable and Mr. H. Mark, of Sweden, Mr. Gruffman, Mg. Director of ABC-SKF Ball Bearing Co., Mr. Bhargava and other high-ranking officials of the Larsen and Toubro made a dash to Poona to bid a fond farewell to the departed engineer.

The elite of Sindhi community and humble among them turned up in full force to the crematorium. The subdued chanting of Holy hymns from scriptures, readings from Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Sri Sukhmani heralded the beginning of the end and, in the presence of hundreds, Dr. Vaswani's mortal remains were put on the funeral pyre and were touched by the consecrated flames.

In Dr. Vaswani's death, India and the Sindhi community in particular lost a noble son. May his soul rest in peace.

—Poona Herald, July 25, 1964

A PRINCE WITH THE HEART OF A HEALER

It was evening. I was in Karachi, many years ago. The sun was setting. I sat by the sea-side watching the sunset. I gazed at the beauty of the many-coloured scene. I gazed and gazed and I heard a marvellous music. Nearby were a few children,—playing! In the play of the little ones, methinks, was the play of the Eternal Child. I saw, too, a few persons, men and women, worshipping,—as the sun was setting,—the Great Mystery of Life-in-death, of Death-in-life!

Filled with joy was the heart within me. The ancient verse of the Upanishad flowed into me :—"Out of *ananda* (bliss) is the world you see : into *ananda* flows back the universe!" And in that silence by the sea-side, as the sun was setting in beauty inexpressible, I recalled the words of the Buddha to his disciples :—

Go forth, O bhikkhus!
For the good of the many,
For the joy of the many,
In compassion for the world,
For the good and joy
And blessings of Gods and men!

Go forth, ye bhikkhus!
And speak to them
Of the Dhamma Eternal!

Proclaim, O bhikkhus!
The holy life,—
The life that is perfect and pure!

Tears stood in my eyes. Into silence I went for a while. Then, opening my eyes, I read in a journal the following words of wondrous beauty. I asked myself:—"Whose are these enchanting words?" I read the words, again and again:—

May I be for all beings
A healer of pain!
May I be to all who ail
A doctor and a nurse!
May I give food and drink to all
Who suffer from pangs of hunger and thirst!
May I be to the poor
A treasure untold!
May I be a defender of those
Who forsaken lie on the roadside!
May I be to those who long for the Other Shore
A boat and a bridge!
May I be a lamp that holds the light
To those who lose the way!

These words of Shanti Deva have haunted me, again and again. I have read them, again and again, and my eyes have been touched with tears.

SHANTI DEVA was a prince who renounced the palace to become a servant of suffering humanity. The exact date of his birth is not known. He lived in the seventh century A. D.

Shanti Deva was born in Surat. His father, named Sila, was a king of Gujerat. It was named Saurashtra, "the Good Kingdom." Sila was a son of Harsha, the great emperor of India, who ruled for forty two years (606 to 648).

India was honoured as a great nation in Harsha's days. The Chinese pilgrim to India, Hsuan Tsang, tells us

in his "Travel Diary" that he was deeply impressed with king Harsha's generous nature. In the course of a talk, the king said to the Chinese pilgrim :—"For many years now I have been ruling over India. I was growing anxious because I was not making progress in virtue. I almost despaired of my efforts in well-doing. Then it occurred to me to amass at Pryag (Allahabad) an immense quantity of riches, and every five years I distributed them all." This the king called, the "Distribution of Deliverance."

The Buddhist pilgrim conferred on the king the title "Siladitya," "the Sun of Virtue." King Harsha was, indeed, strong as the sun is strong : and the king was generous and tolerant of different faiths in India. He was a scion of the Gupta line and the Gupta kings were at once strong and tolerant.

The Gupta rule was disturbed by an invasion of the Huns : and India relapsed for a century into chains. Then came Harsha. He recaptured Northern India. He transferred the capital of India from Thaneswar to Kanauj. He gave to India the peace she piteously needed. He wrote poetry and drama : he became known as the "Poet-king of India." To his court were drawn literary men : one of them was Bana, a great master of Sanskrit.

King Harsha wrote, among others, the following books :—(1) *Ratnavali*; (2) *Nagananda*; and (3) *Priyadarsika*. Harsha became a disciple of the Buddhist Faith : and he rejoiced in being a friend and a servant of the poor. The noble example of Ashoka inspired him and he put a stop to animal slaughter in India : he forbade the eating of flesh-diet. He established travellers' rests and built shrines on the banks of the Ganges. He realised that the One Light of Truth shone in different faiths, and he gave generously to Brahmin as to Buddhist scholars.

Every five years, the king opened what he called the

"Plain of Almsgiving." To this Plain were attracted five lakhs of people to receive alms from the king and to bless him with the blessings which the poor ones give in abundance. The king, entering his spacious tent, bowed in reverence to the Name of the Buddha, reciting the *mantra* :—"*Buddham saranam gachchami!*" ("I take refuge in the Buddha!") and gave liberally to the poor, seeing in them all his Master. Harsha gave gifts not alone to Buddhist *bhikkhus* but, also, to Brahmins and heretics,—for twenty days at a stretch. He gave generously, also, to the poor and the orphans, to widows and old men, to the blind and the cripple. Every day the king gave until, as the Chinese pilgrim says, "all the wealth that had been accumulating in the royal treasury was found to be completely exhausted."

This "Almsgiving" the Buddhists rightly called the "Feast of Salvation." At this impressive ceremony, the king gave away everything he had,—his necklaces, his earrings, his bracelets, the garland of his diadem, the pearls which adorned his neck, the diamond that gleamed above his head. Aye, the very royal robes he wore he gave away in charity. And parting with his clothes, he looked to his sister to give him a common, worn-out garment, and he put it on repeating the words :—"*Buddham saranam gachchami!*" And he bowed in reverence to "all the Buddhas of all the countries"! Then said he in deep humility :—"So by giving away all my treasures I deposit them in the Land of Happiness! And may I in future births, too, learn not to hoard but to give away,—to all who are poor : in them resides the radiant Buddha!" As an offering, too, to the Buddha, Harsha gave a little poem composed by him in reverence :—

The Enlightened One,
The Adorable One,—

The Buddha, adored by multitudes of the Gods,
And by the Perfect Ones and the Divine Singers,
And the Great Spirits in Heaven and on Earth,—
Him, the Buddha, I hail!
Him, the Buddha, I hail!

HARSHA was succeeded by his son, named Sila,—in moral life and spiritual aspirations worthy of the great king Harsha. King Sila's son was Shanti Deva. On the day he was about to receive royal consecration, Shanti Deva saw, as in a dream, a Blessed One named Manjusri,—regarded as a hero and a saint. Of Manjusri, we read :—"He takes joy in giving : he serves by giving." Shanti Deva was a psychic. Manjusri's voice spoke to Shanti Deva in the dream :—

Shanti Deva! Shanti Deva!
Renounce! Renounce!
Renounce the glory of kingship,
And be a servant
Of the poor and lowly!

Shanti Deva obeyed the Voice. He renounced the palace : he put on the humble garb of a *bhikkhu* (mendicant). Shanti Deva joined the brotherhood of the poor. Shanti Deva remembered how his Master, Gautama Buddha, too, having left the palace, had become a wanderer in search of Truth, and having attained to Enlightenment had become a Teacher of Wisdom and a Healer of suffering humanity.

Shanti Deva took the vow :—

I believe in the great Beings, the Bodhisattvas, the Servants of suffering humanity.

And birth after birth shall I be a Server and a Healer of the world that travaileth and groaneth in suffering and pain.

Shanti Deva resolved to be a Bodhisattva. He said :—

Wise be the vow of a Bodhisattva,—
Not to attain nirvana for his own sukkha (happiness),
But to come, again and again, to the maya-dominated Earth.
And take all who inhabit the Earth forward to the Supreme Height!

Shanti Deva breathed out, day and night, the aspiration :—

May there be not one in pain!
May there be not a single sinner!
May there be not one who ails,
Not one who is despised and forlorn!

And may all things,
All beings of breath,
Be wholly happy,
Filled with the bliss
Of the Holy Buddhas!

Significant is Shanti Deva's aspiration to be a Bodhisattva. Full of meaning is the word "Bodhisattva." "Bodhi" means "Enlightenment," "Wisdom," "Knowledge," "Gnosis," "Vision" of Noble Truths : "sattva" means "being" or "essence." "Bodhisattva" means "one whose being or essence is *bodhi*, Enlightenment, Wisdom." Such an one is a devotee of Wisdom or Illumination, a lover of the Light. The Bodhisattva is the great Giver, the Giver of his life to others, the Giver of his best,—the Radiant One, the Merciful One, the Illumined One, the Giver of Light to a world dark with delusions and doubts. The Bodhisattva is he who serveth suffering creation with compassion and wisdom in his heart.

A MUSLIM YOGI

Come with me, in imagination, to a country beyond the bounds of India. The country is called Parasa. It is near Iraq, in Turkestan. The inhabitants of Parasa are Muslims.

In an Islamic family in Parasa was born a child. His parents were poor and he received little education. But the grace of God was upon him. He grew in years and aspiration. He got illumination. Is not illumination better than all the education of the universities of the world?

This child of grace and beauty, born centuries ago, grew to be a *bhakta* of the Lord and a teacher of men and angels. He came to be named after his birth-place. He was named Parasi,—"belonging to Parasa."

He lived in a cottage : but there was in his heart a longing for the Eternal. His heart was not in the things of the earth. As a youth, he dreamed of the True, the Good, the Beautiful. He had no dreams of money or power. Away from the madding crowds, he lived his life, apart from the world. And again and again, he put himself the ancient question:– "What is life? And why is man born on the earth?"

Gradually, the thought grew on him that there was no growth without obedience to a law. Then grew on him the thought that to grow in the Life Beautiful, he must renounce earthly desires. Passion made a man ugly, deformed. Purity was the secret of beauty and radiance.

One day, a strange, mystic impulse stirs him. He leaves his cottage. His Home is elsewhere. He goes to a forest. He stays there for some years. His soul ripens : he learns to meditate : he teaches himself self-control. And he makes the supreme discovery that the world and its pleasures pass away : the Eternal alone is.

Again and again, you may find him speaking to himself, telling his body :—"I will not let you have what you clamour for!" The body clamours for comfort : the body would fain keep away from work and toil : and the body would like to be lazy or indulge in luxury. So this great *bhakta* teaches his body to be moderate in eating and sleep. Eating much and sleeping much are sins against the spiritual law of moderation. A few morsels of food are enough for him. One day, he is tempted to eat one more morsel. Then he repents : he sheds tears. He tells his body :—"Break not the divine rule of moderation, if thou wilt grow in health and radiance." And he teaches his body, also, to be simple in dress. For some days, he wears leaves of trees,—and feels happy!

So in the forest he lives, in silence and in fellowship with birds and animals, with trees and flowers, with the stars and the running brook. He grows in fellowship with nature. He learns simplicity,—the secret of the radiant life. He learns meditation,—the secret of the saints. His face grows in beauty. His heart grows in sympathy and the power of understanding. He sings : he dances : he weeps : he cries, again and again :—"Be Thou not afar, my Lord! But keep me at Thy Feet always!"

He becomes a *yogi*. He sees the Light : he hears Voices within him. And, one day, a Voice says to him :—"Finished are thy labours, my child! Return to thy native place and open there a School of spiritual wisdom. For unhappy are men and they long for a message of hope and healing!"

He listens to his inner Voice. It leads better than all the books and all the arguments of learned men. He opens in his native place a spiritual School. Many join it. He comes each day and, in his simple way, teaches the profound truths of life.

One day, a member of the School comes to him and says :—

"Master! I have a longing to feed you : won't you come to my house? It will be blessed by your presence."

The next day, he goes there. He is a Muslim, but he eats no flesh : yet he does not compel members of his School to give up eating flesh. He believes that life teaches better than lips : and a servant of God must impose nothing on others, but only bear witness to the truth and beauty of the higher life.

The Yogi now sits down to meals. He hardly puts the first morsel in his mouth when he finds that it is a piece of flesh. He immediately takes it out and exclaims :—"Blessed be the Lord!" He washes his mouth. He quietly gets up and says to his host :—"Brother! you have been kind. You have prepared for me food in love. I accept it. You did not know, brother! that I take no flesh. But you have given me love in abundance. Blessed be the Lord!"

Then he talks to his host of spiritual life and the way to wisdom. The host has no food to offer to the Yogi. But his talk hath lent new beauty to the meeting : his talk hath opened to the host a treasure of man's divine heritage. He is a new man! And the Yogi returns home, repeating the *mantra* :—"Blessed be the Lord!"

This one truth he teaches, again and again, and he teaches it with power, because he lives it in his daily life. "Let not yours hearts he troubled," he says; "but in all stations of life, say :—'Blessed be the Lord!' And if your bodies be sick or in pain, say :—'Blessed be the Lord!' For, nothing happens without the Will of Allah. Not a leaf stirs, not a hand moves, not an eye winks, not a tongue tells, not an ears hears, without the Will of Allah. To walk the Will of Allah is religion."

THE TEACHER

FROM mountain-tops he came,—the Teacher.

He came to a city to teach the truths of life.

And he stood in the market place. He saw a crowd in a state of great excitement.

One,—a Muslim,—said :—"My religion is the best."

Another, a Christian, said :—"Alone the Christian gospel is true."

And a Hindu said :—"The Sanatan Dharma is the noblest religion."

And from heated words they came to heavy blows : and a big quarrel ensued,—in the name of religion.

Then went up the Teacher to them, and said :—"Why quarrel ye? Religion came to bind and beautify and build, —not to create hate and strife. Come with me!"

And he took them to a beautiful garden full of roses. And he asked them to sit down. And when the excitement had subsided, he asked them all to gaze at the beauty of a rose.

Then, standing in their midst, he said :—"Look! how the petals of the rose cluster round their golden centre! So are all religions and all prophets and saints so many petals cluster ing round the one Rose,—God, the Beautiful. He, the Golden Purusha, is the golden centre of all!"

And their eyes touched with tears, they embraced one another in love.

THE CONVERSION OF A KING

ABU HASAN lived in a small place named Kharka. Great was his influence on those who saw him. He was a man who subjugated his senses : it was his aspiration to become a vehicle of the Spirit.

He was a contemporary of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (in Eastern Afghanistan), who lived toward the end of the tenth century. Mahmud saw India's rich treasures, across the borders. India's temples had accumulated vast quantities of gold, silver and jewellery. The Hindus, alas! had not organised their forces for the protection of their country and their wealth, their culture and freedom. About India's boundaries hovered hordes of Afghans and Turks, Huns and Scythians. And Hindus suffered from internal divisions.

Towards the end of the tenth century, Mahmud swept across the frontier with an Afghan force and attacked the Hindus at Bhimnagar. The Hindus were unprepared. We know not how many of them were slaughtered. But we know that Hindu temples were destroyed and Mahmud returned to Ghazni with treasures of jewels and pearls. And every winter Mahmud came to India and returned to Ghazni with his treasure chests filled with silver and gold.

Mathura, the city of Krishna, too, was attacked by Mahmud. He took from the Temple statues of gold and precious stones. He came again and attacked the prosperous city of Somnath. The temple-priests offered him millions of money to spare the Temple. But Mahmud was a man of blood and iron. He believed in war and violence. Under his orders, the temple-priests were ruthlessly slaughtered. Somnath, with its hoarded wealth, succumbed to the invasion of this man, who resembled

Attila and Chengiz Khan. Yet, when he died, they hailed him as the "greatest sovereign of his age." He was, perhaps, the richest king of whom there is any record in history.

THE memory of his cruel deeds haunts Mahmud. Bitter are the tears of repentance he sheds. An adviser says to him :—"There is a prayer of the Indian people. Repeat the prayer, again and again, and you will be consoled."

And Mahmud says :—"O, tell me the prayer."

And the adviser repeats the prayer :—

"From the unreal lead me to the Real!
From darkness lead me to Light!
From death lead me to Immortality!"

"Yes," says Mahmud, "this world is woven in darkness : this world is shot, through and through, with death! My years are wasted. I have but built a kingdom of darkness! I cry for a Kingdom of Light. I begin to realise that to love mercy is to walk the way to peace and joy."

Some days pass by. The king is again in a mood of extreme dejection. He sheds copious tears and asks the adviser :—"Is there a holy man to whom I may go and have his blessings?"

The adviser says :—"Yes, sire! Nearby is the humble dwelling of a Muslim *dervish*, a true saint, a man of God."

Mahmud says :—"To him let us go tomorrow!"

Mahmud Ghazni comes to meet Abu Hasan. At first a messenger is sent to meet the saint. The messenger says :—"Servant of God! the great Sultan cometh to meet you. It is but meet that you come out of your house to greet the king."

Abu Hasan says :—"Brother! forgive me. Go and tell

the king that Hasan is all absorbed in greeting the King of kings, and has no time to greet anyone else."

Mahmud Ghazni is amazed at this answer. His vanity is wounded. But he exercises self-control and says :—"Let me see this man,—and test him."

Mahmud Ghazni puts off his royal robe and gives it to a companion to wear it. Mahmud, himself, puts on the simple dress of a *sipahi* (soldier). The two reach the cottage of Hasan.

At the door, Mahmud gives a salute to the *dervish* who is sitting in his room. And the *dervish*, seated on the ground, returns the salute but does not go out to greet the king.

The *sipahi* says to Hasan :—"O *dervish* of God! your king is at the door. Rise to greet him!"

Hasan says :—"These be but forms and ceremonies. A *dervish* rises above them all to commune with the Beloved. Send your servants afar, then come to me."

Mahmud now knows that Hasan knows and sends afar the servants and enters the cottage and sits at Hasan's feet.

The king says :—"O *dervish!* do explain to me what Bayazid means."

And Hasan says :—"Bayazid saith :—'Whoever seeth a God-man is blessed : he hath conquered all ills.' "

"How can this be?" asks the king. "The Holy Prophet had two uncles. They were evil-minded and they saw the Holy Prophet. But their ills were beyond measure and they were in the depths of misery."

Hasan says :—"O king! you speak as one who knoweth not! 'Only a few of his followers did really see the Holy Prophet!' Thus is it written in the Holy Writ. And you forget that Allah looketh at you but you *see* Him not. God's *nazar* is upon you but you do not have a vision of Him. A God-man may *look* at you, but you may not really *see* him. Only to a few is granted the vision of a God-man as he

really is in God!"

The king is struck with this answer : and with folded hands he says :—"O *dervish* of God! teach me. For I know nothing."

Hasan says :—"O king! what may I teach? (1) A king should keep away from injustice; (2) a king, with a heart contrite and lowly, should, in fellowship with the people, worship Allah everyday; and (3) a king should look upon his people with eyes of compassion and serve God by being a servant of the people."

The king's eyes are touched with tears. And bowing down in reverence, the king says :—"Bless me, O *dervish* of God!"

And Hasan says :—"O my God! Thou art the Lord of Compassion! Forgive Thou the men who walk the way that leadeth to Thee!"

"And why?" asks the king.

"Lest they be tempted to fall in the trap of pride and think that they are a class apart from others!"

The king says :—"A second blessing, too, give me thou, O *dervish* of God!"

And Hasan says :—"So act everyday that your works and their fruits are praised in the Court of the Angels."

"And why?" asks the king.

"For the praise of men is flattery and is born of conceit or ignorance : but the Angels know and they praise with a clean heart and a seeing mind."

The king receives the radiation of the saint's loving heart and feels very happy. Filled with joy, he places at Hasan's feet a gift of a thousand gold *mohurs* (sovereigns). And Hasan lays his hand upon a piece of bread, and he breaks it into fragments, and one fragment of it he gives to the king, saying :—"Eat it!"

The king begins to chew it, but he cannot gulp it down

his throat. And Hasan says to him :—"O king! you are unable to swallow this fragment of bread : you find it too bitter for you. Is it not so? This bread does not go down your throat. Then tell me, O king! how can I swallow these bitter *mohurs* of gold. Take these back, O king!"

The king presses Hasan, again and again, to accept the *mohurs* : not one does Hasan touch.

The king rises to go.

"And now," says the king, "let me take leave of you, O *dervish* of God! I go with gratitude in my heart for your teaching and your blessing. But one longing remains."

"What is it? Speak without reserve!" says Hasan.

The king says :—"I wish to take from you something as a token of my visit to a saint and a servant of God."

Hasan then takes a fragment of cloth worn by him and hands it over to the king. The king's joy knows no bounds. And as the king is about to go, Hasan rises up and bids him farewell.

Then says the king :—"O *dervish* of God! when I came to you, you treated me with supreme indifference. But now, as I go, you rise up and show respect to me! What is the meaning of it all?"

Hasan says :—"When you came to me, you came in the pride of a king : you came to examine me. Now you go in humility and purity and with the mercy of God in your heart. And over you shines this fragment of a *fakir's* garment, radiant with the golden Light of God! I have risen up to bow *not* to a king, but to this golden Light of the King of kings!"

PAINTING PICTURES

One day, an artist brings a beautiful picture to Tolstoy,—a picture of "The Last Supper." A moving picture this! Jesus is about to go from this world. He is about to take up the Cross. And before leaving, the Master meets his disciples.

In this picture, Jesus is represented as washing the feet of his disciples. What a lesson in humility! The disciples have been quarrelling among themselves as to who is the greatest in their midst. Jesus takes up a water basin and washes the feet of his disciples. Jesus fain would teach them the truth :—"He is the greatest who is a servant."

The artist shows his picture to Tolstoy and wishes to know if he has painted well. Tolstoy looks at the picture and after a few moments says :—"If you had loved deeper, you would have painted better." The artist returns with the picture to paint better.

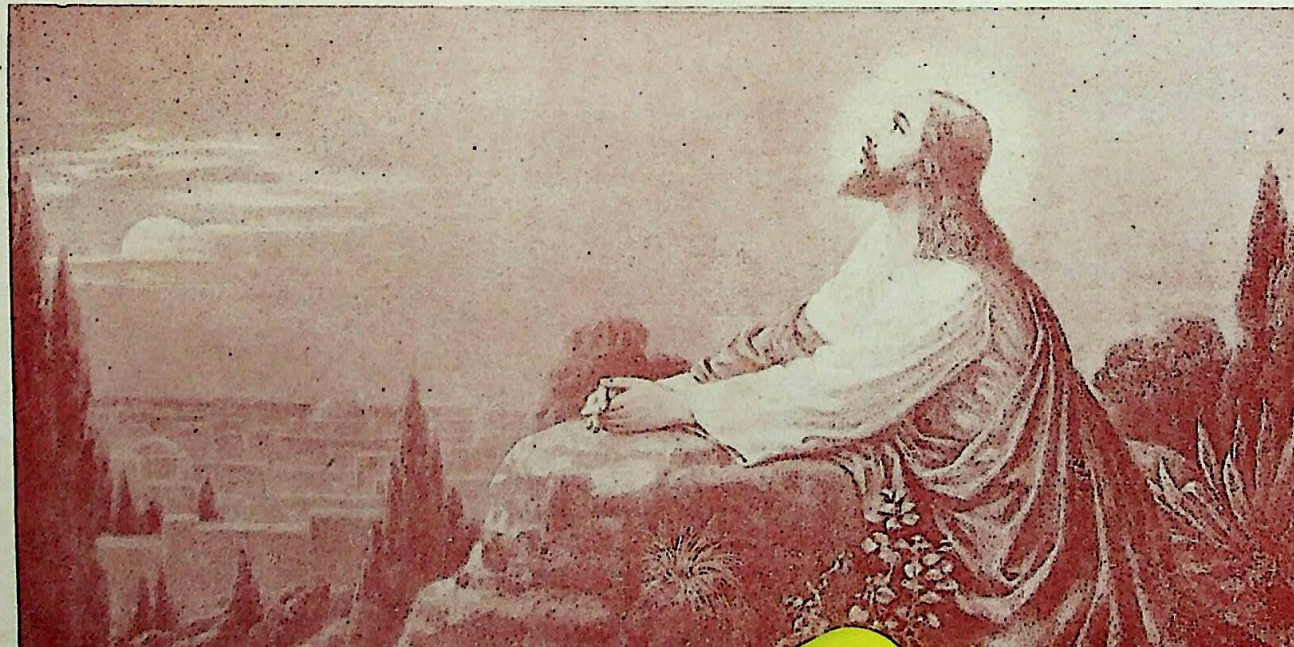
You all are painters. What pictures are you painting? If a brother was angry with you, did you give him anger in return? Did you meet unkindness with unkindness, or with goodwill and patience? What have been your action pictures? And what have been your thought pictures? Your thought forms? Within you is the Master! What pictures of the Master have you been painting? If you loved deeper, you would paint better.

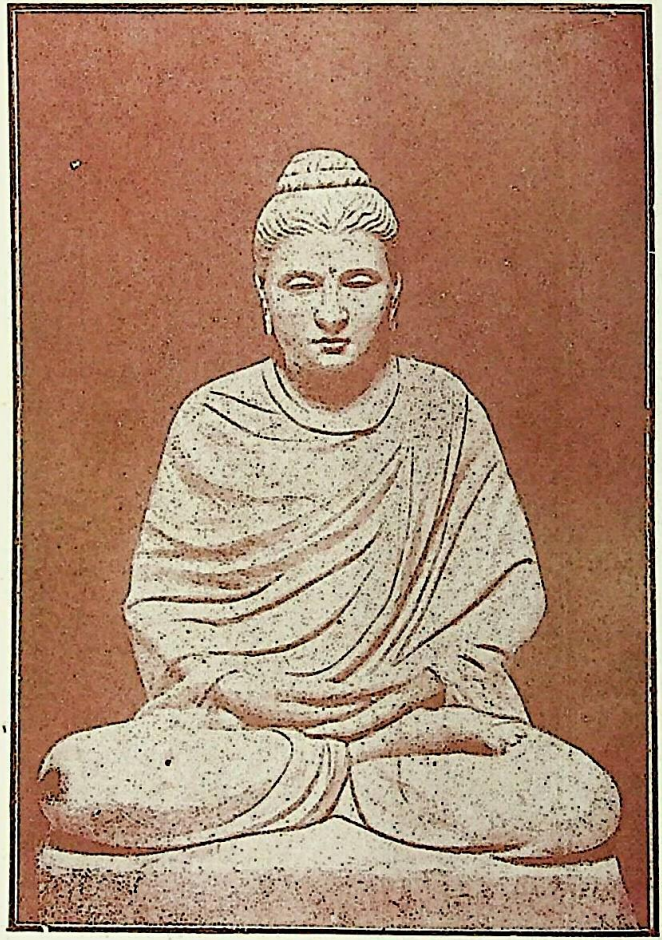
Some have been painting pictures of money and pleasure, forgetting the noble ideals of service and sacrifice. O, paint some pictures of the Master! Paint them in these two colours,—purity and love. In your waking hours and in your subconscious self, paint the Master's pictures. Paint them in purity and love. And you will be blessed.

CHRIST IN COMMUNION

Lo! the Kingdom of God is within you!

—*Jesus*





GAUTAMA BUDDHA

O bhikkhus! blessed, indeed, are we, truly happy are we, though we call nothing our own!

—*Buddha*

THE BUDDHA AND THE PRINCE

Thus have I heard :—

The Buddha was a lover of mountains, rivers and forests. On hills and in forests did he spend periods of silence. They were periods of meditation. He would sit there with the birds near him. He loved them as his brothers. They loved him and felt happy in his presence,—so full was it of peaceful vibrations. The Buddha's presence breathed out benediction to all.

There comes to him, one day, a young man, fair of face and full of grace and clad in purple robes. He is a prince. He is in quest. Who will give him the light he seeks,—the light on life's problem? He has heard of the Buddha,—the Prince of the Great Heart who left his palace and went into silence for six long years and practised *tapasya* and triumphed over *Mara* and won the Secret.

To the Buddha in the forest comes the young prince. He prostrates himself before the Lord and says :—"Master! a prince and heir to my father's throne am I. I come to thee, for thou art a physician of the soul. Accept me as thy disciple!"

The Buddha is silent. The Master is the Brother of the poor and outcast. The prince is clothed in purple robes.

The prince speaks again :—"Master! speak to me, for I seek thee. Scriptures have I read, and I am versed in the lore of rites and ceremonies. Accept me as thy disciple!"

Scripture-reading avails little. And empty rites cannot fill the hunger of the soul.

The prince gazes at the Blessed One and says :—"Master! what shall I do to be accepted as thy disciple?"

And the Buddha's answer is brief :—"Strive,—and thou

shalt attain!"

The prince says :—"Master! I shall strive and return. When may I see thee again?"

And the Buddha says :—"After the rainy season is over."

The months of the rainy season slowly pass away. The prince is out again in search of the Buddha. He is sitting in a little mud-house. The prince prostrates himself before the Buddha and says :—"Master! I have striven and now return to be thy disciple!"

And the Buddha smiles and asks :—"Have you striven?"

"Master!" says the prince, "I went back to the palace, and I renounced rich foods and worldly pleasures, and I kept far from my wife, rebuking her for not obeying me, more than once, and I slept on the floor, and I pinched my body, and I woke up many a night and looked for the Light. The Light has not yet come!"

The Buddha says :—"I preach not asceticism. My doctrine is of the Middle Path. Go back! Not yet mayst thou be my disciple!"

The prince, with tears in his eyes, asks :—"Master! wherein have I failed? Have I not striven hard?"

The Buddha, with eyes radiant with compassion, says :—"Your wife committed a fault, and you say you rebuked her more than once! You did not understand her : you were not patient with her. You strove hard,—but not in love. They who strive truly are from anger free : in their hearts is compassion more copious than waters in the sea. You tried to be pure. But purity is not enough. Purity must shine with the light of love. Else purity may lead to pride."

Is not the story a parable? Yes,—purity is not enough! Purity must be illumined by love. Some time ago, I saw the Himalayan peaks touched with light. How lovely they looked! Purity is a peak : love is a light,—the Light of lights!

PAGAL

"PAGAL" they called him. And that word means a "fool." He was a "pure fool,"—a fool in the Lord of Love.

In the heart of this "Pagal" was a wonderful love for all,—for men of different religions and diverse nations,—for men and birds and beasts.

His father gave him money to open a shop and sell corn and make a livelihood. He realised that more than livelihood was life. He gave away corn gratis to the poor and needy. In a few days the shop was shut!

Little ones he loved : and to them he sang the Name of the Lord of Love. And they loved to hear Pagal's stories and songs!

Cholera broke out in his village : and "Pagal" went about, from door to door, with a chest giving medicines free and nursing the sick. Greatly was he blessed : for he cured those he nursed.

And one day there came to him a learned pundit from a great university and spoke learned things of ancient and modern religions and then asked :—"O saint of God! what is your religion?"

And Pagal said :—"I am a *murkha* : little have I learnt from the books. But I have taken lessons at the feet of the Lord. And He has taught me a New Religion."

And the pundit asked :—"What is that New Religion?"

And Pagal said :—"It is not a ritual nor a creed. It is not a label nor an ism. The New Religion my Lord has taught me is to be a little one and to worship Him in little things."

And the pundit spoke no more, but went out wondering at Pagal whom the village-folk worshipped as a prophet and a saint of God!

I wandered far and wide. And shunning the crowds of men, I went up hills and to river-banks and secluded spots.

I disappeared in a forest,—in search of God. And there I heard, one day, a voice. It said :—"I am with thee. Why wanderest thou? I have led thee into darkness. Through the *yoga* of darkness shall I lead thee into the Light! I have been with thee in thy work. Remember, work is, also, an instrument of My Will. And man's work is not 'design' but 'destiny' appointed by the Eternal."

And I said :—"Yes : I have wandered far and wide. And sometimes I have heard tunes but lost them! Can I recover them? And know their meaning? And what shall I do?"

And the voice said :—"There is but one thing to know : it is the meaning of life and its quest. The one thing, the greatest thing, is Love. And Love is an unspoken Reality, but not unseen. And when you see Love, even in the shadows and darkness of life, there is no more to ask, no more to find!"

And I asked :—"What shall I do to see Love?"

And the voice said :—"Something better than doing. Silently gather! Each day Eternity pours two treasures,—light and darkness. Silently gather them! Out of the two springeth Love. Through the 'dark night of the soul' must a man go, if he would grow in the love which is not softness but the strength of self-giving, the joy of self-renunciation. Silently gather these two treasures of Eternity!"

And I asked :—"Must I not, then, dwell in the forest, away from the haunts of men?"

The voice said :—"No! Go back to the world! There,

in the struggle and tears of life, have I made My home. There shineth My Love. You will not see it in isolation. Be in the world, but remain uncontaminated. Be in the world : for in sorrow and suffering are they,—My children, broken and bruised, who have not yet, alas! seen the glory of the *Atman*, the Self! Go and serve them!"

I said :—"But in service, the 'ego' is up. I have known men who served greatly, but great was their pride and love of power."

The voice said :—"Yes; many who serve, alas! go astray, wandering in the dark *maya* of pride and power. Serve not like them! Serve non-egoistically! Serve with a child's heart! Serve as serveth the flute! Serve and sing! Sing My Name! Sing it on the flute of thy heart! Sing it so that others, too, may sing with thee! Sing and serve!"

And I heard the Song of the Flute! It ravished my heart. Who sang the Song? He whose voice spake unto me the words of wisdom.

And He withdrew the veil and I beheld the beauty of His Face : I fell at His Feet! I adored Him, and He vanished! Sri Krishna, the King of the Forest, the King of my Heart! And I came back to the world and Him I seek to serve,—in man and bird and beast.

THE MAN ENIGMATICAL

He mingled in the crowd. They called him the "Man Enigmatical." In a modest, little cottage he lived. They respected him much. They came to him for medicines. And children received his smile and listened eagerly to his stories and songs. He was not a man of many words. Once a week he met a special class, and in a quiet way spoke of several things. Here are a few of them gleaned by a disciple from two of his recent talks :—

*Thou art not dust, nor wilt thou to dust return! Awake, brother, awake! And see the splendour of thy diamond-heart!

*Each day is lost that doth not rise as an offering to Thee, O Lord!

*I would be a sweeper at the gate of the palace of my King, rather than be the president of the Indian Republic. The honours of the earth are empty : the service of my King is the richest wealth of life.

*The King of Beauty becomes Himself a Lover of him who loveth Him.

*Truth is not learnt nor stolen from books. Truth is revealed to the seeker in the fullness of time. God, the Great Guru, is the Revealer of the Truth. The Gurus are path-pointers and show how to receive the Revelation.

*Aspiration is nobler than ambition. If you must have an ambition, let it be this,—to live in the Eternal Now!

WHO KNOCKS AT THE DOOR ?

SHE is a village girl. They name her Daya. Everyday, she takes her father's cattle to the grazing ground. Every evening, she returns with song and music on her lips.

One day, while alone in the grazing field, she hears Voices in the void.

Whence are they? What do they signify?

The next evening, as she returns, she looks into the waters. She gazes at a Vision. She hears a Voice saying :—"Krishna! Krishna!"

On reaching her house she meets her mother, and asks:—"Who is Krishna? Where is He?"

The mother answers :—"Krishna is the Lord of Life. And in the Forest dwells He."

Daya gets no sleep at night. Her thoughts are filled with Him, the Lord of Life. In the house they are all asleep. Daya gently bows at the feet of her father and mother. Daya looks tenderly at her brothers and sisters. Daya stands on the threshold.

Then, with eyes gleaming with love, she looks once more at her father and mother and brothers and sisters. In the dark of the night, she ventures out alone,—to meet Krishna in the Forest!

She enters the Forest. She shouts out thrice :—"Krishna! Thou art a Forester! I come to dwell with Thee, Lord of Life!"

But there comes to her a Voice from the woods :—"Return to thy home! Not in the Forest mayst thou find Me!"

Daya, obedient to the Voice, returns. And, day after day, she hears the Voice, not knowing what It means.

Again and again, she moves out to see : but the Vision

is not there!

It is noon. There is a knock at the door.

Daya gets up to open the door. What does she see? A poor, old, shrunken widow!

"Mother!" asks Daya, "what may I do for you?"

"I am thirsty," says the widow, "and I have hungered the whole day : and I have not a piece of cloth to cover my half-naked body."

Daya enters her kitchen and prepares meals. Daya opens her box and takes out a garment given her by her mother some days ago and intended to be worn by her on special occasions.

Daya places the meals and the garment at the feet of the old woman.

Then Daya goes to fetch water. She returns.

"Mother!" she says, "here is water!"

And she presses the cup to the widow's lips. When, lo! the widow is not there! Nor her little cottage!

A beautiful house suddenly rises to view. Shining lights are there. And music floods the place. And in the house is seated Krishna playing upon the Flute!

Daya falls at His feet.

Krishna blesses her and says :—"That poor old widow was my *rupam* (form).

"I was thirsty, and thou didst give me water to drink.

"I was hungry and thou didst feed me.

"I was naked, and thou didst clothe me.

"My vision is thy reward."

Is this story a parable?

Who knocks at India's door with pale face and hungry eyes?

Behold! thirsty and hungry and naked stands Krishna,—the Comrade of the poor!

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